1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11



## CHAPTER III

## EVOLUTION OF THE RECÔNCAVO

175 Introduction. The first permanent colony on the Baía de Todos os Santos was established by the Portuguese in 1549.[1] This colony, at the city of Salvador, was the nucleus of settlement in the Recôncavo. The Recôncavo was thus one of the early European colonies in the New World.[2] The first Portuguese colonists came to seek their fortunes in the exploitation of the land. The ethos of the Recôncavo economy in the four centuries since its founding has remained fairly constant: the realization of the greatest agricultural profits with the least capital investment, the minimum conservation of land and labor, and the most grudging adjustments to changes in technology, markets, and the social and political order. Most of the million descendants of Portuguese colonists and Negro slaves who live in the Recôncavo today are imbued with the orthodox values of the exploitative agricultural society established here in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Shifts in markets and in the relative importance of commercial products have not been accompanied by equivalent changes in the speculative and exploitative orientation of the society. In the initial period a market for Recôncavo agricultural products was assured because it had a virtual monopoly. The development of alternative and competitive sources for these products broke this monopoly and caused a continuous increase in the speculative character of agriculture in the Recôncavo. This area did not respond to the increased risk by diversifying its agricultural base but persisted in the same crops and the same methods of cultivation. Such change as did take place was in the form of reluctant, tardy, and minimal adjustments so that in many ways the

1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11



161 distribution and the vested political and economic interests of the
162 Recôncavo allowed it to continue as the dominant region of the state.

177 The Recôncavo has remained a conservative area in Brazil, and
178 within the state it seems to exert a strong traditional influence. On
433 a national scale, however, the traditional values which are preserved
249 in Bahian culture have been overridden by the aggressive dynamism of
565 São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Moreover, the economic core of tradition
181 in the Recôncavo--the sugar-producing upper class--is being progressively infiltrated and dominated by the new economic interests of the Central-South. The effects of these new economic interests are manifest in the administrative and labor problems of the sugar industry in the present decade.[48] New economic groups also are coming to the fore in the tobacco industry.

The technological revolution in the sugar industry and the emergence of a new "progressive" upper class have weakened but not destroyed the traditional orientation of the Recôncavo. The cultural patterns which have so successfully resisted basic change for almost four centuries will not easily give way. However, the issues have been joined, and already the old technology, the old upper class, and the old inter-class social fabric have been profoundly disturbed. In the long run it seems inevitable that the cultural patterns of the Recôncavo will have to accommodate many new values.

177 Not all the new social forces are restricted to the upper
178 class. More and more new technology, such as the automobile, new
565 political and social institutions, such as labor unions, and new ideas
181 from the South, brought through newspapers, radios, and travelers, have affected the lives of the lower classes. While the access of this group to new ideas is more limited than that of the upper class,

1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11



177
178 its vested interest in the traditional system is weaker. Thus on all
565
181 social levels the old Recôncavo is being threatened.

178
181 For the present, however, tradition is a continuing and power-
241
433 ful force in agriculture and in the economic and social institutions which surround agriculture in the Recôncavo.

1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11



128 orientation. This will be followed by a discussion of demography as a basis for the understanding of the agricultural economy.

• 181 The People of the Recôncavo - Introduction. The Recôncavo is the nucleus of a sub-culture which is a distinctive but integral part of the national culture of modern Brazil. Throughout Brazil the Baiano is characterized by a formality of behavior, an oratorical turn of speech, a sentimental attachment to the region of his birth, and a special accent which distinguishes him from the Mineiros, Paulistas, Gaúchos, or Pernambucanos of the other Brazilian regions.[4] These superficial distinctions seem to be a reflection of deep-seated differences in the culture and personality of the people who live in the Recôncavo and in the surrounding zone. On another level, the culture and personality of the people of the northeastern coast, including the inhabitants of the Recôncavo, is unlike that of the sertanejos (people of the arid northeastern interior--the Sertão).[5] Some of the culture and personality traits of the Recôncavo have a significant relationship to local agricultural phenomena.

178 181 241 567 The Baiano of today, as has been seen, is the product of several centuries of historical evolution along lines distinct from those of Central and Southern Brazil and to a lesser degree from those of the rest of the Northeast. A significant feature of the development of the Recôncavo was the social cohesiveness which derived in a large measure from the original strength and periodic re-enforcement of the slave labor latifundia system. Although this system was operative in other regions of Brazil, it was generally less highly organized, and its vestiges have had less impact on contemporary society. In the Recôncavo it remained the chief cohesive social force until the end of the nineteenth century, and cultural and economic survivals of the system remain in force today.

1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11
Brazil SL1



B
433
178
BB
433
178
179
181

Economic and social changes in Brazil during the last century have had two important effects upon the relative position of the Recôncavo: (1) This historic region, in common with much of the Northeast, has lagged behind the new economic and social centers of the Central-South--the Recôncavo has become, vis-a-vis Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and the southern states, an under-developed area. (2) Many new, usually externally originated, cultural elements have been rapidly accepted in the Recôncavo, whereas much of the conservative ideology of the society has remained essentially unchanged.

BB
563

Racial Characteristics. The Recôncavo is a region of heterogenous racial characteristics--in every município each of the three basic racial groups (white, black, and mixed) comprises at least 10 per cent of the population. These racial categories generally do not correspond to social groups, nor is the Recôncavo in any sense a plural society. In linage, in social and cultural interaction, and in the daily business of earning a living the various people of the region are closely linked.

During three centuries of slavery hundreds of thousands of Africans were brought into Bahia, and the Negro element in the population is still large. As a result of this and the more or less continuous miscegenation "Baia [Bahia] and Negroid characteristics are very closely associated in Brazilian thinking."[6] On the basis of the 1940 census, over 70 per cent of the people of the state of Bahia were Negroes or mixed bloods. Only one other Brazilian state--Amazonas--had a higher proportion, and the national average was only 36 per cent.[7] Within Bahia the proportion of non-whites was highest in the Centro-Litoral (east-central Bahia), which includes the Recôncavo. In 1940, 78 per cent of the people of this census division were Negroes or mixed bloods.[8]

1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11
Brazil SL1



BB
241
464
178
166
731

agricultural population is small. However, refugees from the drought also found their way into most parts of the Recôncavo. Even in 1953 they were to be encountered as squatters in Muritiba, as cane field workers in Santo Amaro, and as porters in Salvador.

Refugees from secas usually have not become permanent additions to the labor force of the Recôncavo. The sertanejo of the Northeast is renowned in Brazil for his attachment to his terra (native soil), no matter how cruelly it treats him. Especially those migrants who settle as squatters on the margins of the Recôncavo seem only to wait for the renewal of the rains to return to the sertão. In 1953 migrants were still entering the Recôncavo along the Feira de Santana-Salvador highway, but others were boarding the train in Salvador and returning to the sertão. They had come from the sertão on foot or by begging rides on trucks, found jobs in the Recôncavo, saved a few cruzeiros, and were returning to their native terra. Some refugees remain in the Recôncavo, of course, but the number is proportionately very small.

BB
249
464
166
178

Several sections of the Recôncavo, notably the sugar cane zone, are losing rural population and agricultural labor at a serious rate. The municípios of Santo Amaro and São Francisco lost 6,400 agriculturalists between 1940 and 1950. The reduction in the number of agriculturalists in the sugar area is at least partially a symptom of the growing rationalization of labor under the big usinas, which increasingly dominate the sugar industry. The emigration from these areas is selective--the majority of the emigrants are young adults who leave to seek employment and broader opportunity elsewhere.

B
BB
241
166
[181
565]

Emigration within the Recôncavo is one current of the great tide of agricultural unrest ascribed to all of Brazil.

> The rural Brazilian of the lower classes is notorious for his nomadic or migratory habits, for his lack of permanent attachment to the soil, for his tendency to

1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11 •
Brazil SL1



B
BB
241
166
• 181
565

> shift about from place to place. In few nations are such large proportions of the rural people, who in turn are three fourths of all people, so constantly on the move.[23]

BB
241
166
464

In the Recôncavo this shifting is like a game of musical chairs, in which the odd participant, probably thinking himself lucky, goes to Salvador. The exchange of places occurs on many levels: there is movement from plantation to plantation within the sugar zone, even between plantations operated by the same usina.[24] Many agricultural workers shift from one to another of the various agricultural zones within the Recôncavo.[25] These shifts of population in the Recôncavo primarily involve the agricultural laborers, share croppers, and tenant farmers. The landowners move only under the strongest pressure, and the upper class landowners are as immobile as the lower classes are migratory. However, these landowners compose only a small part of the agricultural labor force.

Another fluid element in the agricultural labor force of the Recôncavo is seasonal labor.

> Itinerant seasonal agricultural labor has for a long time been an important element in the sugar zones of the Northeast where at harvest time many of the cane cutters come from the "agreste" or even from the "sertao" into the "mata" zone.[26]

The principal source of this seasonal labor for the Recôncavo is the small farmer class of the sertão of Bahia north of the Rio Paraguaçu and east of the Chapada Diamantina. These workers are males, exclusively; the number involved is not known, but it is probably on the order of 5,000. Some sertanejos return again and again to the same fazenda or usina; others change their place of employment from year to year. They all return to the sertão at the beginning of the wet season to plant gardens for their families and to harvest cotton and other crops.

BB
[162]

1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11



241 [464] The skills of the 196,000 workers are an important agricultural resource in the Recôncavo. This resource can best be evaluated in terms of the prevailing agricultural systems: hoe and rudimentary plow agriculture. Hoe agriculture is universal in the Recôncavo, and in a society so thoroughly permeated with agricultural activity it is fair to assume that, except for some completely urbanized laborers in Salvador, all workers are familiar with the simple tools of this form of cultivation. [249] Plow cultivation is more specialized; it is used throughout the sugar cane zone but only in preparing the fields for planting. The seedstalks are covered with a hoe, and knives are used [407] for weeding and harvesting. Outside the sugar zone plows are rarely encountered.

[231] The domesticated animals which play a prominent role in cultivation in the Recôncavo are oxen, horses, mules, and donkeys, and the rudiments of their management are almost universally understood. The prominent crops of the Recôncavo are ubiquitous—manioc, corn, beans, sweet potatoes, peanuts, tobacco, sugar cane, bananas, and oranges are grown in all areas, and their cultivation under the prevailing agricultural system is common knowledge. There is little present need for agricultural labor specialized beyond this level.

241 178 It is clear that the introduction into the Recôncavo of new, radically different crops or techniques of cultivation would alter this [181] relatively favorable situation. The agricultural worker of the Recôncavo, like his counterpart in many other parts of the world, is inherently conservative. As in the past, he will continue to resist even minor changes, such as improved methods of seed selection in corn or improved curing of tobacco. More radical changes would probably be [212] resisted more strongly. The problem of "selling" new ways of producing agricultural products is difficult not only because of the

1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11
Brazil SL1



BB 633 464 433 and, to a lesser extent, the rest of the Recôncavo and the state. The relatively large and affluent upper class of Salvador utilizes an extravagantly large number of domestics and of industrial workers--in food, clothing, and construction industries.

BB 178 181 433 161 B BB 161 162 Conclusion. The preservation of traditional values among the people of the Recôncavo is evidence of the survival value of their conservative culture, but the relatively slow growth of the population is indicative of a declining economic role in the nation. Although the population of both Brazil and the Recôncavo grew between 1940 and 1950, Brazil's population increased 26.5 per cent, the Reconcavo's only 16 per cent. In Brazil as a whole, urban populations increased 46 per cent, in the Recôncavo only 34 per cent. The rural population of Brazil increased by 17 per cent; the approximately comparable figure for the Recôncavo was 4 per cent.

Within the Recôncavo the net effect of population changes in the decade 1940 to 1950 was the reduction in rural population from 60 per cent to 54 per cent of the total population (see Table XII). BB 161 162 241 464 Even more serious, from the agricultural point of view, was the decline in the relative number of agricultural workers. Despite the influx of agricultural people from the sertão, the percentage of the total population in the agricultural labor force fell from 21 per cent (1940) to 18 per cent (1950).

BB 633 [162] The greatest single concentration of population in the Recôncavo is the city of Salvador. One-third of the people of the region live in this predominant city, occupying the tip of the peninsula which separates the Baía de Todos os Santos from the sea. In this eccentric peninsular location, Salvador is relatively distant from the main centers of agricultural production and has only circuitous land

country beyond, is a large, colonial, two-story building--the county courthouse (prefeitura), the official center of local county administration. With heavily barred windows on the ground level, it also serves as the county jail. At the top of the hill is a large church, the mother church of the parish of São Roque. On the right, on top of another hill, is the imposing Franciscan convent. The main street of the town is narrow, paved with cobblestones and lined by old colonial houses in various stages of repair. To the left one sees the "beach," which at low tide is an expanse of ugly black mud, typical of the shores of this back part of the bay. The long dugout canoes of the fishermen are anchored there and rest on the bottom when the tide is out.

As the boat sails away and the townspeople go about their business, the streets empty, and a peculiar hush, which is characteristic of Vilà Recôncavo, falls over the town. There is an atmosphere not so much of sleepiness and inertia as of decadence, as though life had already passed by. The few people who remain somehow seem to be left over from something in the past. The houses which face the main street are somber, their façades going straight up two stories from the street, their windows shuttered. Some of them are crumbling, the mortar falling away, exposing the stone of which they are built; others are in complete ruin. All of them are turning black from the constant exposure to humid salt air, and moss is growing on the walls where the sun never strikes.

From the top of the hill, in front of the mother church, there is a magnificent view of the Bay of All Saints, and it is easily understood why this place was chosen 332 years ago as the site for a new town. This part of town is the old Vila Recôncavo (see map of town), dating back to a time when the settlement was the only administrative center of inland colonial Bahia. Upon this hill and the one on which the convent stands, the elite of the sugar lands built their town houses called sobrados. Once upon a time these streets with their stepping-stones were the scene of colonial opulence, of sedan chairs carried by liveried slaves, of soldiers in uniform, of ladies wearing gloves and carrying parasols. Today this old part of Vila Recôncavo is inhabited by simpler people, the town's upper class, who eke out a living in the local bureaucracy, or as merchants, or as representatives of the state and federal governments. They are quiet, gentlemanly people trying to keep up a semblance of dignity, a feat which becomes more difficult all the time.

632
178
315
434
651
652

the refinery, namely gasoline, kerosene, diesel oil, bottled gas, and other petroleum derivatives. As a result of the increased income, the county government will be able to build up the county seat considerably. A hospital is already being built, as well as a new dock for the boat which comes from the city.

178
632

In Milagres, located in the neighboring county, there is already a considerable movement for breaking away from the parent county and becoming a separate municipio, a common pattern in Brazil for districts which reach a certain population and degree of economic activity. Thus there are two possibilities for urban growth in the area and for the formation of urban centers which will attract the large rural population. The town of Vila Recôncavo is close to realizing other possibilities. The construction of a road from the town to Centro has already begun, filling a long-felt need. Its completion will make it possible for cars, buses, and trucks to come from Feira, on the edge of the sertão, to Centro, down through Vila Recôncavo to Milagres, and on into the city, shortening the long trip by the existing road which follows the edges of the Recôncavo. Such traffic would "put Vila Recôncavo on the map," and would greatly increase its contacts with the outside world. In addition, the possibilities of the introduction of a new crop to the community will bring increased commercial activity and a much greater tax income, enabling the county to build its own roads and bridges and to make other improvements for the development of the area.

178
491
489

178
245
652

Thus the community structure of Vila Recôncavo, which five years ago was in the process of crystallizing around the factory town, is now ripe for further change. The factory town continues for the present to be the major center, but the old county seat has all the possibilities of a rebirth of its former importance. In fact, because of the petroleum industry and the forthcoming changeover from sugar cane to cacao, the factory town is threatened as a community center, the position which it has only recently been consolidating.

179
621

Finally, one of the most important changes in Vila Recôncavo in these five years is a change in attitude on the part of the people. Vila Recôncavo was always known as a conservative community, maintaining its old traditions and ways, rejecting innovations. However, there is now an air of expectancy and a search for new ways and new things. Dissatisfaction with the sugar industry, combined with the appearance

178
181

178
181 of a new industry and new people, has brought new ideas and the desire for change. The town of Vila Recôncavo is beginning to lose its forlorn air. Inhabitants of the rural area are no longer content with the old ways of hand and animal labor. The community as a whole seems to feel that it is on the verge of something new and exciting. The major outlines of what is to come are not yet clear, but a willingness for change is invading the area.

5: Azevedo--7 D, Z-5 (1951) 1953 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11
Northeast Brazil SO1
Brazil SL1

[SALVADOR]

BB 175 633 [13]

/9 cont./ voyage from the South Sea to the coasts of Chile and Peru made during the years 1712, 1713, and 1714/, Paris, 1732; Adolphe d'Assier, Le Brésil contemporain /Contemporary Brazil/, Paris, 1867.

BB [548]

Founded in 1549, seat of the general government of Brazil and residence of the Portuguese viceroy until 1763, the date when the capital of the colony was transferred to Rio de Janeiro, Bahia was regarded as "the most Portuguese" of the cities of the American continent. Even today it is one of the most important cities of Brazil (5).

N.B. 13 24 31 316 233

5. The State of Bahia has an area of 563,000 square kilometers and a littoral of 100 kilometers; its territory, of varied geographical aspect, is occupied chiefly by plantations of cacao, tobacco, cereals, by stock farms, and by mines of manganese, chromium, diamonds, iron, bituminous schists, etc. After the national census of July, 1950, the State had 4,900,419 inhabitants, 395,993 of them in the city of Salvador itself. The other most populous cities of Brazil are: Rio de Janeiro (federal district), with 2,335,931 inhabitants; São Paulo, with 2,041,716 inhabitants; Recife, with 522,466 inhabitants; Porto Alegre, 381,964 inhabitants, and Belo Horizonte, with 346,207 inhabitants.

NB 161 BB [62]

B 633 162

BB 633 563 [181]

Owing to the conservative and traditionalist nature of its civilization, owing also to the distance that separates it from the other important urban centers, it is considered one of the /10/ demographic and cultural islets of what has been called the "Brazilian Archipelago." As we have said, what makes it particularly interesting is the fact that it was always a melting pot of races, certainly the most representative and the most symbolic of racial relations of the country.

[SALVADOR]

/19 cont./

665 666 578 829 [646] This means that Brazilians born in other States have made careers in different parties of Bahia and have been elected to represent the Bahians at the legislative assembly of the State or at the national parliament. The same candidate, moreover, had been elected governor several years earlier, before this attribute of "foreigner" exerted a decisive influence in the fight led against him.

829 577 /20/ Brazilian customs condemn all social discrimination; the Bahians, particularly those of the more advanced groups, pride themselves on these traditions of tolerance and liberalism, and consider them proper for forming the very prototype of the cordial Brazilian man whom Gobineau describes: "to be very polished, gracious, very friendly," and whose qualities are defined by a Brazilian sociologist as a mixture of kindness, tolerance, and good manners. Life in Bahia is appreciated and envied by some, criticized by others for its slow rhythm, its lack of combativeness, its strict particularism, and for the thousand mechanisms that always work in a way to mitigate the antagonisms and the conflicts between groups and individuals. The French sociologist Roger Bastide said some years ago that it is good "that in Bahia very rapid progress is not at all prejudicial to the qualities of soul that make up its charm."

181 182

641 829 186 What contributes a great deal toward mitigating the tensions between the groups that confront one another in the society of Bahia is the polarization of dissatisfaction that in all of Brazil, but especially in our city, takes place concerning the idea of "government," that is to say, public authorities in general, the population having the habit of discharging on them its aggressive impulses, imputing to this very vague entity all the evils that beset Bahia.

829 * 563 As for race relations, one may state that a certain antagonism exists between Blacks and mulattoes. There are, without doubt, some color prejudices in Bahia, but, as a moreno of liberal profession says, "prejudice is not only the doing of Whites; out of fear of being assimilated with the Blacks, the mulatto avoids them and draws closer to the Whites." A number of informants think that